

In 1992, after raising four biological children, James and Virginia Lawrence welcomed into their home their first foster child. Little did they know that this decision would be the first step in what would become a life-long commitment to helping needy children. Over the last twelve years, the Lawrences have tirelessly devoted their lives to caring for, loving, and supporting more than 200 children who have come into their home through Tennessee's foster care system.

The Lawrences stand out as foster parents for two reasons: their absolute devotion to the children who come into their home, and their tireless work to reunite children with their birth parents. According to Mrs. Lawrence, many of the birth parents "needed parenting themselves. We taught many of them how to be parents, by providing counsel, offering advice and by our example." Whenever it became clear that returning to a birth parent was not a good option for one of their foster children, the Lawrences knew what to do—they simply adopted the child. Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence have extended their loving family by adopting Alisa, now 24, Peggy, 21 and Shelby, 18.

Mr. Lawrence said that, before retiring from the city's police force, he was greatly affected by the many children taken from their families. That experience moved him and his wife to open their home to children in need of a healthy, secure home environment. He added that, "helping children has been a blessing for him and his wife as well." Virginia Lawrence said that, "having the kids around keeps your heart beating another day." She continues to teach the four foster children currently in their home the independent living skills they'll need to build a promising and rewarding life.

The Lawrence's big hearts, patience and devotion is evidenced by the countless number of children they have reached out to over the years; and in their willingness to continue opening their doors to young people in need of a warm, secure and loving home.

On behalf of the Fifth District of Tennessee, I congratulate and thank the Lawrences for setting a wonderful example of what it means to make a difference in the community and in the lives of our most vulnerable children. I hope we'll all reflect on the Lawrence's model "of ordinary people, doing extraordinary things" as we reach out to help those affected by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF OSIRIS CHRISTOPHER EARL NURSE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today, I am happy to congratulate Shannon and Courtney Nurse on the birth of their new baby boy. Osiris Christopher Earl Nurse was born on September 13, 2005, at 10:24 p.m., weighing 6 pounds, 2.4 ounces, and measuring 19.5 inches long. Osiris has been born into a loving home, where he will be raised by parents who are devoted to his well-being and bright future. His father Courtney is a tremendous help to my staff and countless other people throughout Capitol Hill. Today, we are pleased to celebrate Osiris' healthy birth and welcome him to Washington.

INTRODUCING A BILL ESTABLISHING THE KATRINA COMMISSION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague from New Jersey, Representative MENENDEZ, to introduce legislation establishing the Katrina Commission to examine and evaluate the Federal Government's response to Hurricane Katrina and assess our ability to respond to future large-scale disasters. We are proud that our legislation is the companion bill to S. 1622 which was introduced last week in the Senate by our colleagues Senators CLINTON and MIKULSKI.

While the long-term impact of Hurricane Katrina will be felt for years, our evaluation of the Federal Government's response to, and preparation for, this and other major disasters—natural and man-made—must begin immediately.

Mirrored after the 9-11 Commission, the Katrina Commission will consist of 10 members with no more than 5 being from either the Republican or Democratic parties, thus ensuring an independent and diverse make-up of commission members. The Katrina Commission will be afforded the same powers which the 9-11 Commission enjoyed and will be tasked at finding the answers to the critical questions that we all have. These include but are not limited to:

Were we adequately prepared to respond to a disaster of this magnitude? Are we any more prepared today than we were before Katrina?

What plans were in place before Katrina made landfall to meet power, utility, and telecommunications needs following the storm? What plans are in place for future disasters?

What was the availability of adequate resources to meet the needs of displaced individuals and families, including temporary housing, medical services and facilities, transportation, and food and water supplies?

Did our Federal disaster response plans consider the needs of all communities? What plans existed to ensure that underserved communities reached safety before and after Katrina?

How effective was the Federal Government in its rescue and other life-saving techniques?

Was the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina efficiently coordinated with State and local governments? Was it adequate and appropriate in size and scope?

What improvements do the Executive and Legislative Branches need to make to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our disaster response programs?

Mr. Speaker, my Congressional District received the brunt of three major hurricanes last year. As I said earlier today, certainly our first priority has to be to rescue those who are still alive and provide them with housing, medical attention, food, and water. However, as the Gulf Coast turns to the recovery and rebuilding processes, the billions that Congress will spend will not be enough to fix the problems that exist within FEMA.

Based on my own personal experience dealing with FEMA and its director over the last year, I warn the Members of this body that

the problems you see today are just the tip of the iceberg—and it has nothing to do with the magnitude of the disaster.

Inconsistency in FEMA regulations, constant reinterpretations of the Stafford Act, Federal officials treating local emergency operations centers like revolving doors, lack of coordination, and FEMA's fluid and unclear chain of command are just a few of the many significant and real problems that Floridians dealt with last year and are still dealing with today.

I have literally begged the committees of jurisdiction in this body to hold hearings on these shortcomings. I even introduced bipartisan legislation in March with our colleague, CLAY SHAW, to address a slew of institutional problems within FEMA that we experienced first-hand last year.

Yet every time we take our concerns to the committees, we're told, "It's not a big enough problem to consider on its own." Well, Mr. Speaker, is the problem big enough now? How many people must die in a disaster before something becomes a "big enough problem" in this Congress?

Accountability is the only way to restore integrity in a broken system. An independent commission is the first step in repairing our disaster response system, which we all now know is woefully inadequate.

I ask for my colleague support for this legislation, and I urge the House Leadership to bring it swiftly before the House for its consideration.

TRIBUTE TO LEWIS PLATT

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Lewis Platt, the leading Director of the Board of the Boeing Company and the former Chairman, CEO, and President of Hewlett Packard, who died unexpectedly on Thursday, September 8, 2005.

With Lew's death, our nation has lost one of the leading lights of the business world, a prominent member of the Silicon Valley community, and a wonderful human being.

Lew's death at the age of 64 is a shock to those of us who were privileged to work with him and know him well. He was a person whose example and guidance will be greatly missed. His decency, his integrity, and his common touch made him stand out in a business world known for the archetypal hard-charging executive.

Lew's legacy will be most closely linked with Hewlett Packard, where he worked for more than 30 years. He began his career there as an engineer and rose through the ranks to lead the company from 1992 to 1999 as its CEO.

Lew was a product of the "HP Way," the "walking-around" style of management pioneered by Bill Hewlett and David Packard that encouraged employees to bring their ideas to top management. He embraced the HP Way and was known to eat lunch regularly with employees in the company's cafeteria. He eschewed the privileges enjoyed by most executives of major corporations and unlike most, he always flew coach.

He knew the dividends that the HP Way could bring, and he was able to guide the